

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An occupant protection apparatus for a vehicle, comprising:

driver-seat seatbelt tension changing means for changing a tension applied to a driver-seat seatbelt provided to a driver seat of the vehicle;

passenger-seat seatbelt tension changing means for changing a tension applied to a passenger-seat seatbelt provided to a seat other than said driver seat;

crash predicting means for predicting a crash of said vehicle; and

belt tension controlling means for controlling said driver-seat seatbelt tension changing means and said passenger-seat seatbelt tension changing means so as to increase the tension applied to each of said driver-seat seatbelt and said passenger-seat seatbelt when said crash predicting means determines that there is a possibility of a vehicle crash, and set the tension applied to said driver-seat seatbelt to always be smaller than the tension applied to said passenger-seat seatbelt.

2-7. (Canceled)

8. (New) The occupant protection apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising belt wear detecting means for detecting wear of each of said driver-seat seatbelt and said passenger-seat seatbelt, and wherein said belt tension controlling means further controls said driver-seat seatbelt tension changing means and said passenger-seat seatbelt tension changing means, when said crash predicting means judges that there is a possibility of vehicle crash and also when said belt wear detecting means detects wear of each of said driver-seat seatbelt and said passenger-seat seatbelt, so as to increase the tension applied to each of the driver-seat seatbelt and the passenger-seat seatbelt.

9. (New) The occupant protection apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising physique detecting means for detecting physique of an occupant, and wherein said belt tension controlling means further controls said driver-seat seatbelt tension changing means and said passenger-seat seatbelt tension changing means based on the physique detected by said physique detecting means so that the tension applied to each of said driver-seat seatbelt and passenger-seat seatbelt is set to be smaller as the detected physique is larger.

10. (New) The occupant protection apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising belt wear detecting means for detecting wear of each of said driver-seat seatbelt and said passenger-seat seatbelt and child seat detecting means for detecting attachment of a child seat to said seat other than said driver seat, and wherein said belt tension controlling means further controls said driver-seat seatbelt tension changing means and said passenger-seat seatbelt tension changing means, when said crash predicting means judges that there is a possibility of vehicle crash and also when said belt wear detecting means detects wear of each of said driver-seat seatbelt and said passenger-seat seatbelt and further when said child seat detecting means does not detect attachment of said child seat, so as to increase the tension applied to each of the driver-seat seatbelt and the passenger-seat seatbelt.

11. (New) A seatbelt tension control method of controlling a tension applied to seatbelts of a vehicle, the method comprising:

- predicting a crash of said vehicle;
- judging whether a driver-seat seatbelt provided to a driver seat is worn;
- increasing the tension applied to said driver-seat seatbelt when there is a possibility of a vehicle crash and also when said driver-seat seatbelt is worn;
- judging whether a seatbelt provided to a seat other than said driver seat is worn; and

increasing the tension applied to said seatbelt provided to said seat other than said driver-seat seatbelt when there is a possibility of a vehicle crash and also when said seatbelt provided to said seat other than said driver-seat seatbelt is worn, and set the tension applied to said driver-seat seatbelt to always be smaller than the tension applied to said passenger-seat seatbelt .

12. (New) The seatbelt tension control method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising:

detecting attachment of a child seat to said seat other than said driver seat; and
prohibiting an increase in the tension applied to said seatbelt provided to said seat other than said driver-seat.